

Amendment Dated: July 21, 2003

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising:

charging an image bearer with a charger;

irradiating the image bearer with light to form an electrostatic latent image thereon;

developing the electrostatic latent image with a toner to form a toner image on the
image bearer;

transferring the toner image onto a transfer sheet with a transferer;

fixing the toner image on the transfer sheet upon application of heat; and

cleaning a surface of the image bearer with a cleaner; and

wherein the toner comprises:

a binder resin;

a colorant; and

a zirconium compound including formed of zirconium and at least one
compound selected from the group consisting of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and, a salt
thereof of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and mixtures thereof; said zirconium compound
having a main diffraction peak (A) at a Bragg (2 θ) angle of $5.5\pm0.3^\circ$ and a diffraction
intensity of from 2 ,000 to 15,000 cps when irradiated with a specific X-ray of CuK α .

2. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, wherein the wherein
said fixing step comprises:

transporting the transfer sheet having the toner image thereon while at least one elastic

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roller contacts the transfer sheet to fix the toner image thereon upon application of heat.

3. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin wherein~~ the zirconium compound further has a sub-diffraction peak (B) at a Bragg (θ) angle of $31.6 \pm 0.3^\circ$ when irradiated with the specific X-ray of CuK α , and wherein a diffraction intensity ratio (A/B) of the main diffraction peak (A) to the sub-diffraction peak (B) is from 3 to 25.

4. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin wherein~~ the zirconium compound has an average particle diameter of from 0.2 to 4.0 μm .

5. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherelin wherein~~ the zirconium compound is subjected to an extraction treatment so as to be dispersed in ion exchanged water at a concentration of $1.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ g/cm}^3$; and
wherein the ion exchanged water has a conductivity of from 5 to 20 S/cm.

6. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherelin wherein~~ a content of the zirconium compound in the toner is from 0.5 to 5 parts by weight based on a total weight of the binder resin.

7. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherelin wherein~~ the toner ~~includes~~ comprises a volatile component in an amount not greater than 0.1% by weight based on a total weight of the toner when measured at a temperature of from 100 to 150 °C.

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8. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin the at least one of an wherein said~~ aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and ~~a salt thereof is a 3,5-di-tertiary-~~ butylsalicylic acid.

9. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin wherein~~ the binder resin comprises a polyester resin in an amount of from 50 to 100 % by weight based on total weight of the binder resin, and wherein the polyester resin has an acid value of from 5 to 25 mg KOH/g.

10. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~whererin wherein~~ the charging is performed while contacting the charger with the image bearer.

11. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherelin wherein~~ the transferring is performed while contacting the transferer with the image bearer.

12. (Currently Amended) The image forming method of Claim 1, ~~wherelin wherein~~ the cleaner is a cleaning blade.

13. (Currently Amended) A toner composition comprising:

a binder resin;

a colorant; and

a zirconium compound ~~including formed of~~ zirconium and at least one compound

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selected from the group consisting of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid or, a salt thereof of an aromatic oxycarboxylic acid, and mixtures thereof;

wherein the zirconium compound having has a main diffraction peak (A) at a Bragg (2θ) angle of $5.5 \pm 0.3^\circ$ and a diffraction intensity of from 2,000 to 15,000 cps when irradiated with a specific X-ray of CuK α .

14. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, whererin wherein the zirconium compound further has a sub-diffraction peak (B) at a Bragg (2θ) angle of $31.6 \pm 0.3^\circ$ when irradiated with the specific X-ray of CuK α ; and

wherein a diffraction intensity ratio (A/B) of the main diffraction peak (A) to the sub-diffraction peak (B) is from 3 to 25.

15. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, whererin wherein the zirconium compound has an average particle diameter of from 0.2 to 4.0 μm .

16. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, whererin when wherein the zirconium compound is subjected to an extraction treatment so as to be dispersed in an ion exchanged water at a concentration of $1.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ g/cm}^3$; and
wherein the ion exchanged water has a conductivity of from 5 to 20 S/cm.

17. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, wherein a content of the zirconium compound in the toner composition is from 0.5 to 5 parts by weight based on a

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total weight of the binder resin.

18. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, further comprising a volatile component in an amount not greater than 0.1 % by weight based on a total weight of the toner when measured at a temperature of from 100 to 150 °C.

19. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin the at least one of an~~ wherein said aromatic oxycarboxylic acid and a salt thereof is a 3,5-di-tertiary-butylsalicylic acid.

20. (Currently Amended) The toner composition of Claim 13, ~~whererin~~ wherein the binder resin comprises a polyester resin in an amount of from 50 to 100 % by weight based on a total weight of the binder resin; and

wherein the polyester resin has an acid value of from 5 to 25 mg KOH/g.